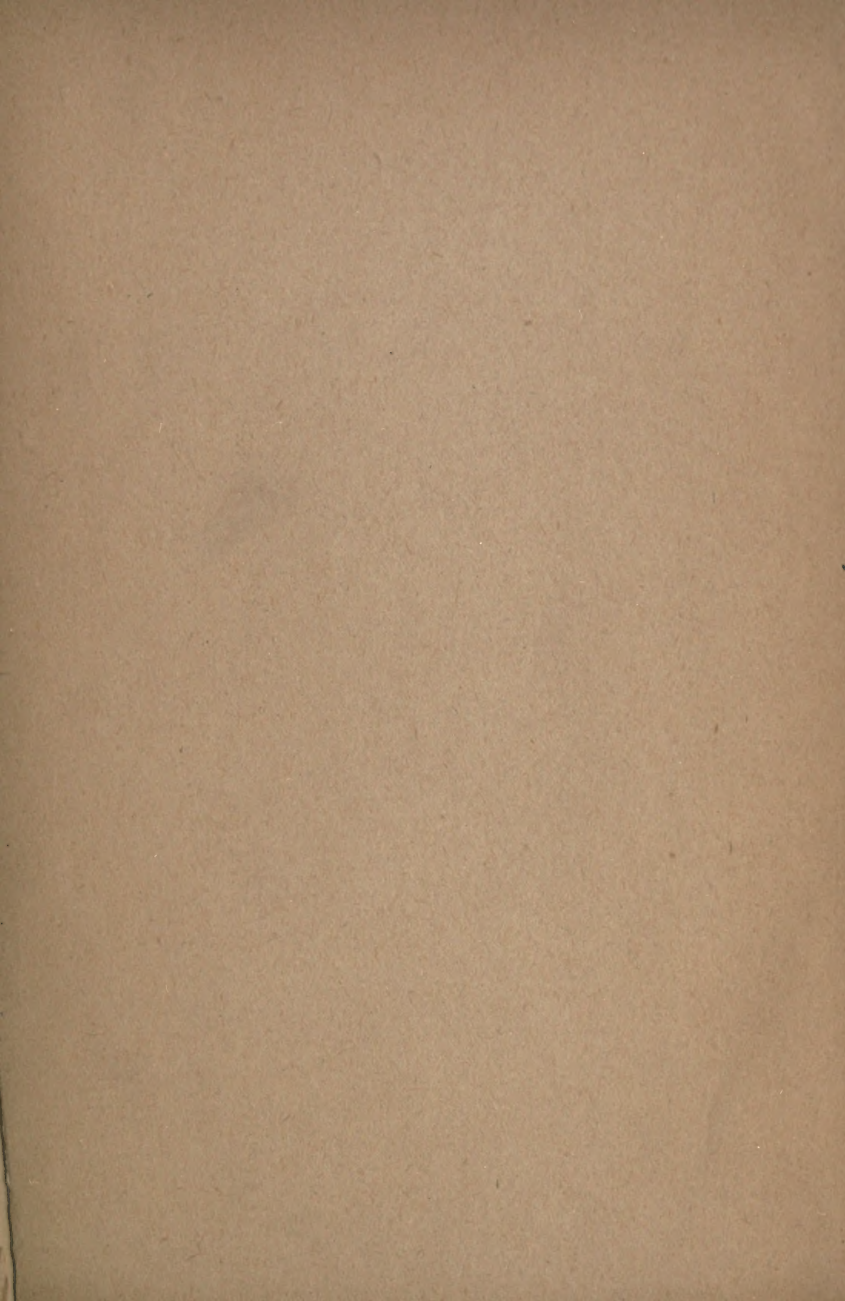


JUDAS, BY  
HAROLD MONRO

W. L. M.









BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

POEMS . . . . . (1906).

THE EVOLUTION OF THE SOUL (1907).

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# JUDAS.

BY  
HAROLD MONRO.



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*I have written this Poem believing in Jesus of Nazareth. I dedicate  
it to those who, not pausing to impute its heresies to me,  
shall recognize that my concern has been to see  
as Judas saw, to understand as he under-  
stood, and to disclose his kinship  
with the money-victims of  
this and every age.*



## JUDAS

JUDAS who sold his lord :—alone he walks  
 Dream-haunted through the grey, where not a star  
 Glimmers, nor any dawn breeze whispers hope.  
 A wilderness surrounds him league on league  
 Forlorn with desolation to its bounds.  
 Full in the dreary midst a little lake  
 Lies stagnant, and above him dusky clouds  
 Pursue in muffled majesty of woe  
 A dreary course from east to dreary west.

I met him on the threshold of a dream,  
 And felt amid the gloom his startled eyes,  
 Still luminous with half-forgotten light,  
 Weary and large from striving to remember ;  
 And then his face, emerging from a mist,  
 Took gradual form and colour, till I saw  
 Dimly a red beard flecked with grey, a mouth  
 Thin-lipped and babbling inarticulate sounds,  
 Curved nose, thick eyebrows, feathery hair, which lean  
 Long fingers had dishevelled, last of all  
 A stooping form and sudden crafty gaze  
 Sideward.—He hesitated, then he drew  
 From underneath his raiment something bright,

And, bending over it, into his beard  
 Muttered, till when, askance, I touched his sleeve,  
 He looked half up and murmured through his teeth,  
 "I count my shekels," then : "one, two, three, four"—  
 To thirty counted. Each was stained with blood.  
 Lo ! as he ceased, the silence of the plain  
 Suddenly like a whirlwind gathered up,  
 And broke in one convulsive human shriek,  
 Trembling and flashing in white agony,  
 And died ; but, swift as thunder after lightning,  
 Was followed by a roar from east to west  
 Of human laughter, mocking peal on peal :  
 And then athwart the still air eagerly  
 Big drops fell, few at first and very large,  
 Then more—but they were hot, and more again—  
 But they were red ;—the hissing air was red ;  
 The clouds rained blood :—Shrieks, laughter, then hot blood  
 And Judas prostrate fell upon the ground,  
 His thirty shekels scattered, and his arms  
 Stretched out before him : motionless he lay.

At length the storm surceased, and once again  
 An undisturbed stagnation settled down,  
 Silent, except where, trickling through a cleft,  
 Some little splashing rivulet of blood  
 Gurgled and murmured. Judas moved at last,  
 Strained out a bony-knuckled hand, felt for  
 And found—his eyes kept hidden—first one piece  
 Of silver, then another, then a third,  
 And strained the other hand, then raised his face,  
 And then his body—slowly standing up.

Blood trickled from his hair and from his arms.  
 The woe of all the world was in his eyes,  
 And on his countenance unuttered grief,  
 Long centuries of silent agony :  
 Yet, searching in the dust with eager hands,  
 He gathered up his pieces one by one,  
 Began to count them through, made twenty-nine—  
 Searched—found not—raised his eyes, and suddenly  
 Met mine. Now like a beast he crouched and sprang ;  
 I felt his frigid fingers at my throat,  
 His long nails, and his breath upon my cheek,  
 One moment only : then he fell away  
 And groaned, his features puckered and distort  
 With hideous avarice. At last he said :

“Thou hast my silver shekel—give it back !  
 I cannot yield it now. Once, long ago,  
 I offered to the master all my wealth :  
 No merchant makes an offer twice, nor you  
 Shall steal my money. You are flesh and blood :  
 I felt my fingers fasten at your throat ;  
 Therefore no spirit are you, like the rest  
 Who wander on the margin of my land.  
 You come from trafficking about the world,  
 From buying and from selling in the mart ;  
 And you have all the earthly ways about you  
 Of counterfeiting scorn, and lifting up  
 Your right hand with a movement of disdain,  
 Shaking your head and turning on your way,  
 While in your left, secure behind your back,  
 You hold my shekel.—So, you will not speak !”



Now suddenly with long arms curved, with hands  
 Strained, and with breath quick-taken, he advanced  
 In fury ; then his shekel in the dust  
 Lying half-covered saw. At once he stooped  
 And swiftly in his two palms gathered it,  
 And, peering at it, laughed and turned it over,  
 Till he remembered me ; then, screwing up  
 His crafty eyes, he held it firmly back  
 Upon his bosom, peeped at it again  
 Through half-closed hands, and finally drew forth  
 His other coins : " One, two, three, four, five "—  
 To thirty counted carefully, his face  
 Unruffled, as when some dishonest trader  
 Might calculate his profit : then began  
 Replacing them, and would have turned, but lo !  
 Again the silent void was filled with shrieks,  
 Followed by laughter, last of all with rain  
 Of hot blood falling. Nor could I awake,  
 But shrouded in the vision terrible,  
 Must stand and wonder. Piteously he moaned,  
 Stretched out his hands imploring my compassion,  
 And thus began to speak : " Alas ! Have you  
 Not heard my story told in many ways ?—  
 Here is the truth :—At Kerioth I lived ;  
 My father was a merchant. I was sent  
 Upon his business each Passover feast  
 North to Jerusalem ; himself would go  
 At the feast of Tabernacles : twice a year  
 We trafficked in the town. A fashion then  
 It was among the youth of Kerioth

to delve through olden prophecies, and dream  
 of their fulfilment, speculating much  
 vainly. I was a leader in my way,  
 for I could argue always with the laugh  
 well on my side : reserving what I called  
 the hungers of my soul within myself,  
 till I could always meet on their own ground  
 and beat in argument the other youths  
 of Kerioth ; and I was growing weary  
 of forced discussions, certain to diffuse  
 no clearer light on what I called " The Truth."  
 And well I recollect how in that spring \*  
 when first I saw—the master, I had drifted  
 into a rash extravagance of thought,  
 sworn many times that I would kill myself  
 unless I found conclusive answers to  
 wild questions that I flung at heaven.—I  
 was ruined by such folly in the end."  
 He ceased a moment, then with savage eyes :—  
 The poison taints my senses even now,  
 or still when memory gathers in my brain,  
 to realize that unexpected throb  
 of sudden beauty. In Jerusalem  
 I always went to pay the tribute coin  
 myself in Herod's temple. From afar  
 it seemed to float like some entranced cloud,  
 white in the silent blue ; and coming near,  
 we held one's breath a moment in surprise,  
 and shivered for its beauty. But the courts  
 at feast time were polluted by the stench

Of cattle driven in from dusty roads,  
 Foam-flanked upon the burning April day.  
 Their drovers bargained with the pilgrims, and  
 Deep in the shadows of the columns sat  
 Traders and money-changers, greedy-eyed.  
 All this disgusted me, because I yearned  
 For that expected kingdom of the Jews :  
 The long-foreshadowed coming of Messiah,  
 When joy should be established on the earth—  
 And this was but a roaring of the beasts.

Yet in a moment all was changed. 'Twas thus :  
 While sauntering with nostrils lifted high,  
 And gazing on the floating roof of gold,  
 I struck against a pilgrim, who had stooped  
 For something, and, disdainful when I saw  
 His occupation, brushing by, passed on.  
 For he was gathering some stems of rush  
 Torn from a trampled mat, by accident,  
 And cast, all vile, into a heap aside.  
 I noticed as I passed a little band,  
 Who watched him most intent. One might expect  
 Strange things in such a crowd—but never this :—  
 The drovers swearing, traders, raucous-voiced,  
 Wrangling and teasing, money-changers shrill  
 With smirking comment, and the rabble coarse,  
 Complaining—all their mingled voices ceased  
 A swift astonished moment, then broke out  
 In one continuous upward sound.—A man  
 (Not human though he seemed, but more like fire)  
 Was thrashing all about him right and left



With gathered rushes, overturning here,  
 Down-treading, scattering confusion there ;  
 Clearing the place alone : a liquid power,  
 Or breath of God, might be. Then far away  
 He motionless against a column stood  
 With parted lips, panting a little, firm,  
 And speaking not a word ; while, cowardly most,  
 The drovers, traders, money-changers, all  
 Had fled before him. Soon a few advanced  
 And challenged him on what authority  
 He acted thus, while I—I nothing heard,  
 But trembling on the pavement kissed his feet.  
 This was the master. What he might have done ! ”

He paused again : the sweat was on his brow,  
 And his imagination was on fire.  
 Unconscious of the present or of me,  
 He thus continued :

“ I shall not forget  
 How in that ecstasy I cast away  
 Riches, respectability, rank—Life,  
 All, all I might have had to follow him,  
 Who should have been a Monarch of the Jews,  
 Founding the perfect kingdom on the earth.  
 God ! God ! I strove to help him. Oh ! I tried  
 Up to the last. Oh, what I sacrificed !

After the feast we straightway journeyed forth,  
 He and his little band. I left behind  
 Silently, gladly all my circumstance,  
 My servants and my custom and my wares ;  
 I never saw my parents once again.

Oh, wonderful the glamour of his eyes !  
 And lovely seemed the service of the king.  
 Oh, wonderful the beauty of his face !  
 He promised the fulfilment of desire ;  
 And everything he uttered was himself :  
 Oh, wonderful the glamour of his words !

So we passed northward, dreaming through a land  
 All summer-scented, reaching in the end  
 The master's country, lovely Galilee.  
 We prophesied the kingdom. While he preached  
 We stood about him listening, waiting. When  
 He hungered we would find him food, and while  
 He slept we guarded him—the future king.  
 And once he left us, biding many days  
 In rugged places fasting and alone.  
 Then first, far from his gaze and from his speech,  
 I ruminated much how I could help  
 His cause, and what achieve—for till that time  
 I had but followed wondering in the wake  
 Inactive. There was work, I told myself,  
 For me. I questioned often. Then a plan  
 Flashed in upon me. What important step  
 —I asked myself—could be achieved without  
 Money—the final key to all success ?  
 And splendid schemes, how he the godly part  
 And I the necessary worldly share  
 Of regal duties might perform, took shape.  
 At once I acted, begged some scanty coin,  
 And cautiously began to trade. With ease  
 I doubled it, and trebled it right soon,

(But all in secret, so the little band  
 Observed me not) and when the master came,  
 Fresh from God's presence in the wilderness,  
 Had earned a little treasury of gold  
 Towards the future kingdom. That was wise.  
 I wished to tell the master of my plans,  
 But, somehow, when I saw him, held my peace.  
 He was so strange unworldly-wise, and all  
 His dreams were blown from heaven, far-off heaven :  
 And when he came I ceased from trade a while,  
 Following in his footsteps silently  
 From village unto village without gain.  
 Where he would pass 'twas like a miracle :  
 So many followed, wondering at his eyes  
 —Also at what he said ; and corpse-like men,  
 Long ages sick and huddled up with pain,  
 Would tremble when he spoke and almost spring  
 To meet his words ; and sometimes—for he knew  
 Some gentle soothing motion—he would chafe  
 Long while their crippled limbs, till they would stand :  
 But many crying out “ A miracle ! ”  
 He always left them, passing swift away.  
 That was the harm. Oh, what he might have done—  
 Had he but grasped his opportunities ;  
 Not held away from popular applause,  
 Nor wandered dreaming stealthily about,  
 But always lived and acted like a king !  
 —Yet when the fire would flash, to see him then !  
 He loved that sea of Galilee too well :  
 Bethsaida, Magdala, Capernaum,



Nazareth too at first ; for it was there  
 He entered in the synagogue to preach,  
 And knowing him a village carpenter,  
 They cast him forth (incredulous and rude),  
 And sought to throw him headlong from the cliff.  
 But he revealed the beauty of his strength,  
 Scattering shame among them. 'Twas his way  
 All patiently to suffer, but sometimes  
 At last all suddenly to crush. I see  
 Him now upon the summit of the cliff,  
 Towering above them like a giant, (they thought  
 He was all meekness), passing through their midst  
 Quite easily, and leaving them aghast,  
 Scattered and hesitating, with a few  
 Cursing him loud. To Nazareth again  
 He never went. Whole dim unconscious days  
 He wasted on the shores of Galilee.  
 But I could not be idle, and what time  
 He dreamed I carried on a gentle trade :  
 Working to help his cause. He often thus  
 Became through long retirements half forgotten  
 Of those who sought the kingdom. Noise and force  
 Alone convince the people of the world ;  
 And he who not continually is heard  
 Is speedily forgotten. This I sought  
 To tell him once ; but Simon, in whose house  
 He lodged, and called him Peter, came between.  
 I loathed this Peter with his coarse black hair,  
 His large blue eyes and grizzly beard : a man  
 Loud-voiced and powerful without subtlety,

Who could not lie—a stickler for the truth :  
 Therefore I could not trust him. He it was  
 Who mockingly proposed one sabbath day  
 That I, by trade a merchant, should become  
 Treasurer for the band of brothers. They,  
 Taking his words in earnest, make him wroth :  
 And ever after that he hated me.  
 But I henceforth held openly the funds,  
 (To aid the master). Who could organize  
 So well as I amid those simple men ?—  
 None had the brains or worldly understanding:  
 And though I knew the radiance of their light,  
 The bold transcendent beauty of their dreams,  
 Their fear of God, yet no important step  
 Could they have made without me. At the last  
 They tried and failed, and all that enterprise  
 Ended in nothing—worse : a shameful death  
 'Twixt robbers on a tree, and a scattered few  
 Despised and roaming helpless through the world.  
 Was ever such an opportunity  
 For worldly wealth and wisdom to achieve  
 Some purpose ? Very cunning must I act  
 With these my shekels, when the day is ripe  
 For such another enterprise.”

His face  
 Clouded despite such utterance. Despair  
 Belied him, gathering about his lips  
 In lines and furrows, though unflinchingly  
 He thus spoke on :

“ Through me the master's name

Was noised abroad, till one Passover time  
 (My third as his disciple) he prevailed  
 So much upon the people that they sought  
 To crown him king, but he—what think you?—he  
 Was wroth, and crept away and hid himself.  
 So in Capernaum, many, when he came,  
 Left and denied him. I, remaining true,  
 Strove with him, while his favourite Peter stood  
 Silent with staring eyes till I had done,  
 Then turned his back upon me. In the end  
 I was suspected—yes : the slur of doubt,  
 Because I magnified the master's cause,  
 Fell on me. As I looked upon those men  
 I saw them far away for the first time,  
 And wondered, were they worthy of my pains?  
 And doubted, should I cast my life away?  
 And dreamed of happy Kerioth in the south.  
 Yet doubts were soon dispelled, and once again  
 My heart became all rosily suffused  
 With new device and strategy for him.  
 I sought his brethren, eagerly implored  
 Their aid on his behalf : his kith and kin  
 Desiring much, exhorting much, I thought  
 Might urge him onward to his goal. They came  
 Beseeching him with tokens and tears  
 To journey to Jerusalem with them  
 Next feast of Tabernacles : they desired  
 To see him high exalted. He refused,  
 And waited till the uproar of the time  
 Was nearly over : then, so to escape



All observation, journeyed there by night,  
 Hiding by day, and tardily arrived.  
 Thus many of his party there, ashamed,  
 Cried out : ' Who art thou ?—Hast thou come to rule ? '  
 To which he, vague, as ever was his wont,  
 Spoke of some perfect kingdom of the clouds,  
 Out of the present in the far-away,  
 And argued with them, prophesying much  
 But doing little. One decisive act  
 Had won his crown. And still I waited on  
 Hoping against all hope, my little store  
 Increasing daily through judicious trade ;  
 And still throughout Jerusalem I noised  
 His fame, though men would taunt me, speaking thus :  
 ' What people has your master come to rule ? '  
 ' Where is his kingdom ?—Not among the Jews !  
 ' Is he the party of the Gaulonite ? '  
 ' What hath he said of policies and powers ? '  
 Thus many doubted him, and even sought  
 To stone him : but he swiftly passed away  
 Out beyond Jordan—dreaming, dreaming still.  
 Nevertheless the wonder of his eyes  
 Was unforgotten, and about his words  
 There lingered some mysterious delight,  
 Remembered most when he was far away :  
 So many sought and many yearned for him,  
 Saying that soon in purple he would come  
 To claim his crown.

In Bethany there dwelt  
 Two women and their brother, whom he loved,

Named Lazarus, concerning whom came news  
 That he was sick to death. Some impulse burned  
 Throughout the master's being when he heard,  
 And, pondering first a little, he passed back  
 To Bethany with us; and there we learnt  
 This Lazarus was dead, but, going on  
 Into his dwelling, found him breathing still.  
 Then, bending over him with loving touch  
 And strong inspiring words, as he was wont,  
 The master filled him with such strength of life  
 That he arose. Meanwhile I hurried forth  
 Full of this wonder: in the people's ears  
 I poured a tale of how their future king  
 Had brought the dead to life—What could it harm?  
 He almost might have brought the dead to life,  
 And that he should was what they most required:  
 It was the perfect test. Mad with delight,  
 They, rushing, clamoured round him: all of us,  
 Even the sisters of the dying man,  
 Came to believe right soon he had achieved  
 This very wonder. Lazarus himself  
 Appeared before the people. Once again  
 The master fled. In Ephraim for a while  
 He sojourned; but instinctively I knew  
 —Or thought I knew, the kingdom was at hand.  
 His fame passed through Jerusalem. I went  
 Thither at once to organize affairs,  
 Taking new courage. Many Pharisees  
 Spoke eagerly of him, entrusting me  
 With gold on his behalf. I took it all,

And asked for more, narrating in his cause  
 The miracle of Lazarus. Meanwhile  
 A secret council of the Sanhedrin  
 Was called together—haughty, subtle men :  
 This, the next day, in confidence I learned,  
 And learned there was a price upon his head.”

Here Judas paused a moment, looking down  
 And fumbling with the shekels in his hand :  
 Then thus continued :

“Very soon I heard  
 The master was returning for the feast  
 Of Passover to Bethany again.  
 Thither I went to warn him, and to urge  
 Immediate action. ’Twas with Lazarus  
 At supper that I found him. As I crept  
 Into the chamber, tremulous with love,  
 (So long I had not seen him) at his feet  
 Mary reclined—the sister—in her hands  
 Holding a precious alabaster cruse  
 Of Indian spikenard : I had seen the thing  
 Before, and knew its value. Slowly now  
 She poured it out upon the master’s feet,  
 Anointing him, and broke the precious cruse,  
 And fawned upon him with her hands and hair—  
 A wanton thriftless woman. Only I  
 Could understand the spirit of the deed.  
 While those about him whispered, (ignorant !)  
 And smiled as praising her devotion, I  
 Cried out, ‘ For shame ! This perfume being sold  
 Had fetched three hundred pennies for the poor.’

The master gazed a moment. Not a word  
 Of greeting did he utter. Then they all  
 Turned on me cold suspicious eyes, while he  
 Gravely rebuked me for my honest thrift.  
 I who had starved and stinted for his weal,  
 I who alone could help him with my gold,  
 Stood humbled outwardly—but mad within.  
 So, had I laboured all for such rebuke ?  
 Oh fool ! fool ! fool ! For I was faithful still.

I soon departed. Now I had resolved  
 To force him into action, to announce  
 The kingdom everywhere, say he had power  
 And gold behind his cause, and that in Rome  
 Men praised him it was rumoured, that he was  
 Secretly known of thousands, and to tell  
 Of plans to shake the universe, to pay  
 Others to spread report and to proclaim  
 His miracles : and when the time was ripe  
 I had resolved to seize him and enthrone him  
 In majesty and purple. I believed  
 No human power might ever harm the king  
 If once he were exalted to the throne  
 —The saviour long expected, long desired.  
 Though many spoke of dangers and of dreads ;  
 Of crucifixion, if the Sanhedrin  
 Could compass his betrayal—what feared I  
 Trusting Messiah had come ! On the next day,  
 Joyful, along the road to Bethany  
 I went to meet him coming. In my train  
 Were Galilean pilgrims, who were prompt



To follow me with anxious zeal. Hard by  
 The Mount of Olives we perceived him stand  
 Speaking, erect, his auburn hair blown back  
 By soft fresh breezes. One could nigh believe  
 His visage in some radiance enshrined,  
 And all the fire of God seemed in his eyes.  
 From those about me went the joyous shout  
 'Hosanna : hail the Monarch of the Jews !'  
 And from his little band upon the hill  
 An answer rose across the morning air.  
 In triumph to Jerusalem he rode  
 Upon a colt, I walking at his side,  
 While hundreds thronged about him. Ardent zeal  
 Consumed me, and I whispered in his ear  
 My burning secrets, and my dear resolves :  
 All, all I would accomplish in his name.  
 Then I invoked him in the cause of Truth  
 To rise and take his sceptre and his crown  
 And set up his pure kingdom on the earth.  
 Everything I disclosed. He heard me through,  
 Then gazed, but spoke not.—When shall I forget  
 The look of quiet wonder in his eyes  
 Or their disdain that froze along my blood !  
 Then all he said was this, 'The time is come.'  
 As, sighing, he rode onward. I dropped back,  
 Like a spent swimmer whom a silent wave  
 Sweeps over, stifles suddenly, and drowns.  
 A weariness encompassed me : I went  
 Pondering long and drearily. Then came  
 A sudden re-awakening and a light,

With resolution not to cast away  
 My substance for a shadow. Since he turned  
 In everything to Peter or to John,  
 Ignoring me who held the common weal,  
*They* should decide the tenor of his life !  
 Then, since he always magnified the poor,  
 I would not sacrifice the gold for him,  
 Nor strive for him to set a kingdom up ;  
 Not suffer for a king who would not rule.  
 Was he the Christ—the prophesied Messiah ?  
 He called himself the son of God : yet what  
 Had he accomplished in the name of God  
 For us down-trodden Jews ? It was foretold  
 A saviour should accomplish our release,  
 And I had heard him say Jerusalem  
 Should be destroyed : this was his kingly way !  
 I was a Jew, and should I suffer this ?  
 Where was God's kingdom that he told about  
 If not a perfect kingdom of the Jews ?  
 Surely he was a dreamer and his band  
 Blind dreamers following. He had led me far  
 From duty, from reality. As I,  
 A youth in Kerioth, had oft become  
 —Gazing upon the sunset—overpowered  
 By flame, and, while the moments slipt away,  
 Had, all oblivious, lost my better hold  
 On Life : so now, three uneventful years,  
 Held by the fiery beauty of his eyes,  
 I had forgotten all and followed him.  
 Yet I would turn to mother world again,

Turn to the human, tangible and real :  
 Desiring all their worth and excellence.  
 He would not use the money : it was well—  
 He should not ! I had gotten it, and I  
 Would keep it as a fraction of that wealth  
 Which once I sacrificed. —But, looking back  
 Now even, with my wisdom of the world,  
 I surely know, (so potent was his hold)  
 Had he but spoken one inspiring word,  
 He could have had me pouring bitter tears  
 Of desolate repentance on his feet.  
 Not so :—he went his way and I went mine,  
 His to the temple only still to preach  
 And argue with the Pharisees, and mine  
 To compass my enfranchisement. The funds  
 Had risen high. There was a plot of land  
 North of Jerusalem, a barren tract,  
 Neglected, waiting for the careful brain,  
 And ready hand of speculative thrift,  
 Which often, as I passed it, I had planned  
 To purchase. Now exactly for a price  
 Which made the total of the common purse  
 I bought it—bought my freedom, so it seemed,  
 Intending to rebuild by careful steps  
 My shattered fortunes. Sentiment again  
 Blinded my better vision : I had hoped,  
 Clearing my senses of the common purse,  
 To clear them of the master. This performed,  
 (So rapid are the subtleties of thought)  
 A change began,—an agony, like shrieks,

Heard distantly yet ringing through my head  
 Of thousand fiends, and what ideas might burn  
 One moment in some cranny of my brain,  
 Ere I could hold them, whirled, and flew away.  
 Men said I had a devil, for I tore  
 My garments, wrung my fingers through my hair ;  
 And nowhere could I lay my weary head.  
 One morning at a corner of the street  
 Came Simon Peter : I was looking down,  
 And almost ere I saw him he had passed.  
 But each turned back as realizing each  
 A moment late. I met his sea-blue eye :  
 Immediately he plucked me by the sleeve  
 Reluctant, saying, ' Truly, brother, thou  
 Art absent from us long. We need the purse,'  
 And smiled as in derision, adding, ' Come  
 To Joseph's house, the counsellor, at even :  
 For there my master wills we hold the feast.'  
 Then suddenly a passion caught my breath,  
 And, ' Not *thy* master,' I replied, ' but *mine*.'  
 He, laughing yet a little, passed away.  
 Then how the minutes dragged. A fool I was—  
 I went of course. The master raised his eyes,  
 As if he saw his destiny from far  
 Approaching, and he murmured : ' Thou art come ' ;  
 But later added, drawing me aside,  
 ' Judas, I do not judge thee. What thou art,  
 That art thou.' I believe he had divined  
 The innermost intention of my heart  
 Ere I had shaped it. Sentimental still,



'Master !—' I cried ; but Peter interposed.  
 And then we supped, and once again he sat  
 'Twixt John and Peter. Presently his face  
 Clouded a little, and I heard him say  
 That some one should betray him. All uprose,  
 And Peter sanctimoniously outspread  
 His hands, saying ' Not I ! ' Then Jesus turned  
 To me, amid that company of rude  
 Uncultured Galileans. As they gazed  
 Perplexed and foolish on me, all the blood  
 Ran laughing through my veins. Mysteriously  
 He handed me a little piece of bread,  
 Soaked in his wine. Ah, there was freedom in it !  
 I stared them in the eyes. I was accused,  
 Judged and condemned : I knew it—and I fled,  
 Out of the chamber, out into the street,  
 With Freedom ! Freedom ! ringing in my ears.  
 He forced it on me—Why ? I could not tell :  
 I did not care, and still I do not care.  
 'Twas like the clapping of a prison door  
 Behind me. Now to feel and kiss the world !  
 To be sincere : to love myself again !  
 Now for the trade and traffic of the mart !  
 Now for the large magnificence of life :  
 The purple and the splendour and the lust  
 Of being—Now to be myself again !  
 And as I went a new refreshing wind  
 Rushed past me ; and joy glittered in all eyes  
 That peered across the darkness into mine.  
 When some one stopped me, ardently enquired

Where was the master, I said 'Crucified,'  
 Nor paused to see the altered countenance :  
 But onward to the temple ! Caiaphas  
 Had called the Council. Eagerly they snatched  
 The eager words that darted from my lips,  
 And thrust upon me (though I craved it not)  
 Immediate surety :—thirty shekels now ;  
 Three hundred shekels more when he was dead.  
 Alas ! I never held them to their word,  
 For I was weak. Thus was the bargain made :  
 The cleverest impostor of the world  
 Was sold for these, these thirty shekels here.  
 Go, boast that you have seen them ! ”

Though his speech  
 Was bold, yet under drooping lids his eyes  
 Quivered, suspecting I believed him not ;  
 And, seeking to diminish, he increased  
 My disbelief by adding :

“ Since that time  
 I have remembered much, and understood  
 Much that was dark before or very dim.  
 I comprehend the dreamer now who hoped  
 To found the well-constructed world anew,  
 Yet could not, with his peasants, even raise  
 Some unavailing kingdom for the Jews.  
 I know that he eternally was wrong,  
 I, right : and it is proved by the event.  
 For now, 'mid those who traffick in the world  
 How many dream like him ? Is not the race  
 True to the human standard ? When in this

Sequestered haunt I hear afar the loud  
 Shrill wail of splendid suffering, the deep  
 Strong laughter of ambition ; when I feel  
 The blood of human labour nobly shed,  
 And all the struggle of it : the robust  
 Inherent vigour of aspiring man—  
 Oh, then I know, I know that he was wrong.

You have not heard the story of my shame,  
 How my beloved shekels stung my hand.  
 'Twas thus : When I had yielded up the man  
 Who was my master,—not to ruminate  
 Lying abed, or dream, I wandered out  
 By moonlight on my land, endeavouring  
 To formulate some speculative scheme  
 For utmost profit. In the light of dawn  
 A messenger came running with the news  
 He was condemned. Then I returned at once  
 Towards the temple driven by a weak  
 Distraught idea to have my newer life  
 Conformably, respectably begun :  
 I feared some evil luck from this reward,  
 And, seeking Caiaphas, I cast it down  
 Upon the pavement, crying, (to my shame),  
 'The man is innocent of any harm :  
 I swear it—Let him go !' At first he smiled,  
 Then, seeing that his fellow-councillors  
 All frowned, he thundered : 'What is that to us ?  
 See you to it if he is innocent !'

And bade me take my pieces. So the mood  
 Passed over for a little, and I woke

From lethargy to business. But, alas !  
 No more to think precisely nor transact  
 With certainty of judgment : for a voice  
 Kept tingling in a corner of my brain  
 With questions, ' Is the master dead ? ' and then,  
 ' Who sold the master ? ' Singleness of thought  
 Was gone.—Oh, unavailing human mind  
 That wanders through perplexity of life  
 And cannot leave its burden by the way !—  
 And like the murmuring perpetual wash  
 Of water was that murmur : ' What of him ? '  
 ' What of the master ? '—What of him ! Now even  
 It murmurs still, although the greater thought  
 Of something in the future, some amends,  
 Following on prosperity again,  
 Controls it.

On a night just such as this,  
 (Save that the moon is hidden by the clouds),  
 Detained by business late upon my land,  
 A fever took me.—'Twas a barren tract,  
 And almost treeless—much as this—a lake,  
 Like that one, near the centre. First the dark  
 Troubled my vision. Then the glaring moon  
 Arose and pierced my brain. I never saw  
 Such light. I wandered aimless. Everything  
 On earth became revealed : as from afar,  
 I gazed upon the image of myself ;  
 And hopeless radiance stared me out of thought.  
 Then soon a cursèd howling wind arose,  
 And shrieked about the crannies of my soul ;



And everything felt dry except the light,  
 The liquid light of that perpetual moon.  
 And then that pest of shekels in my hand  
 Began : I counted, counted them again,  
 And asked anew their meaning and their end,  
 And wanted lovely Galilee again,  
 And questioned why I wanted it, until  
 The master came to haunt me, and he walked  
 With Peter, black-haired Peter—that was worst.  
 Then came a momentary silence, while  
 I listened for my footsteps as I went,  
 And loved my shekels, fondled them and laughed,  
 And then the storm : the shrieking and the groans,  
 The grinding and the lashing and the blood.  
 It brought some peace ; and something of a thought  
 Took shape.—Oh ! have you felt that cool desire,  
 That tender longing irresistible  
 For perfect silence ? Never looking back,  
 I ran, and stopped, and, laughing ran again,  
 Close by the water fondly counted through  
 My shekels, firmly grasped them :—then the storm  
 Redoubled, as I hanged myself at last  
 To that sequestered tree beyond the lake.

And first there was a torrent, then a sound  
 Like to the distant tolling of a bell  
 Heard through a wood at eventide, and then  
 A vision of the master clothed in white ;  
 And then I stood, my shekels in my hand,  
 Without a change. (O God ! O Providence  
 To grant desire, endurance, and through all

The promise of fulfilment !—While desire  
 Lives steadfast to its aim, death holds away.)  
 My land lies all about me, here the lake  
 And there the tree. I never see the moon.  
 I reckon not the passage of the hours ;  
 And I am most content and fortunate,  
 Dreaming of wise prosperity to come."

He paused and cast a furtive glance, and I  
 Stood motionless in wonder, then began  
 To move because I feared him, but he wailed :  
 " You shall not take my shekels ! You have come  
 To steal them from me. I am satisfied,  
 And so are all the people of the earth :  
 He is disproved who willed it otherwise,  
 For he was crucified and he is dead."

So saying, he began to count again  
 With hesitating voice and sideward looks,  
 Anxious towards the end, when fear began  
 To gather round the brilliance of his eyes,  
 And scarce had finished ere that tempest dire  
 Of human woe re-echoed from the world :  
 First shrieking of a hundred million slaves,  
 Then hopeless laughter hollow through the void,  
 Then tears of blood. A moment—and I felt  
 Those dreadful burning shekels in my hand,  
 And heard him clamour through the seething air :  
 " —Perchance you come from Caiaphas the priest :  
 Tell him I hold my offer open yet !  
 Take him my shekels !—You can save the world.

Cast them upon the pavement : leave them there !  
 And then shall be a miracle of joy,  
 And all the grinding of the wheels shall cease ;  
 The shrieking and the laughter shall be stopped ;  
 The blood shall flow no longer. Take them back ! ”  
 This uttering, he pressed me with his hands  
 As though to force me outward from my dream.  
 I, growing conscious of that other life  
 Which is not sleep, held fiercely in my grasp  
 Those burning shekels to redeem the world.

Thereon began the beating in my ears  
 Of time : but on the threshold of my sleep  
 That form of Judas haunted me again.  
 He wandered aimless underneath the grey,  
 And often stretched his empty hands aloft,  
 Groaning ; and then—Oh ! suddenly he came,  
 And, panting in an agony of speed,  
 Caught at my raiment, tearing with his nails,  
 And biting with his teeth upon my hand,  
 Till it relaxed. Then faintly I perceived  
 That dreadful form retreating through the grey,  
 Counting as in an ecstasy of greed.  
 His voice was like the grinding of the wheels :  
 And shivering in moonlight I awoke.









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